

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) A search method comprising:

obtaining a search query including one or more terms, each term written in a first format, from a user;

translating the one or more terms of the search query into a group of translated queries, each translated query having one or more terms in a second format, using a probabilistic dictionary, the probabilistic dictionary mapping terms from the first format to the second format according to a calculated probability that a given term in the first format corresponds to a term in the second format;

searching a database for information identifying documents responsive to one or more translated queries of the group of translated queries; and

returning search results written in the second format to the user, the search results referencing one or more documents responsive to the one or more translated queries.

15. (Previously Presented) The search method of claim 14, further comprising:

obtaining search result selections from the user; and

using said search result selections to modify the probabilistic dictionary of term mappings.

16. (Original) The search method of claim 15, wherein the modification comprises adjusting at least one probability associated with at least one mapping in the probabilistic dictionary.

17. (Currently Amended) The search method of claim 14, ~~in which the step of~~ where translating the query into the second format includes expanding the query.

18. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings of the query terms.

19. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative language translations of the query terms.

20. (Original) The search method of claim 17, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings and alternative language translations of the query terms.

21. (Original) The search method of claim 18, in which the expanded query includes synonyms of the alternative encodings of the query terms.

22-45. (Cancelled)

46. (New) A system comprising:

one or more computers configured to perform operations including:

obtaining a search query including one or more terms, each term written in a first format, from a user;

translating the one or more terms of the search query into a group of translated queries, each translated query having one or more terms in a second format, using a probabilistic dictionary, the probabilistic dictionary mapping terms from the first format to the second format according to a calculated probability that a given term in the first format corresponds to a term in the second format;

searching a database for information identifying documents responsive to one or more translated queries of the group of translated queries; and

returning search results written in the second format to the user, the search results referencing one or more documents responsive to the one or more translated queries.

47. (New) The system of claim 46, further configured to perform operations comprising:

obtaining search result selections from the user; and

using said search result selections to modify the probabilistic dictionary of term mappings.

48. (New) The system of claim 47, wherein the modification comprises adjusting at least one probability associated with at least one mapping in the probabilistic dictionary.

49. (New) The system of claim 46, in which translating the query into the second format includes expanding the query.

50. (New) The system of claim 49, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings of the query terms.

51. (New) The system of claim 50, in which the expanded query includes synonyms of the alternative encodings of the query terms.

52. (New) The system of claim 49, in which the expanded query includes alternative language translations of the query terms.

53. (New) The search method of claim 49, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings and alternative language translations of the query terms.

54. (New) A computer storage medium encoded with a computer program, the program comprising instructions that when executed by data processing apparatus cause the data processing apparatus to perform operations comprising:

obtaining a search query including one or more terms, each term written in a first format, from a user;

translating the one or more terms of the search query into a group of translated queries, each translated query having one or more terms in a second format, using a probabilistic dictionary, the probabilistic dictionary mapping terms from the first format to the second format according to a calculated probability that a given term in the first format corresponds to a term in the second format;

searching a database for information identifying documents responsive to one or more translated queries of the group of translated queries; and

returning search results written in the second format to the user, the search results referencing one or more documents responsive to the one or more translated queries.

55. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 54, further comprising instructions that when executed by data processing apparatus cause the data processing apparatus to perform operations including:

obtaining search result selections from the user; and
using said search result selections to modify the probabilistic dictionary of term mappings.

56. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 55, wherein the modification comprises adjusting at least one probability associated with at least one mapping in the probabilistic dictionary.

57. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 54, in which translating the query into the second format includes expanding the query.

58. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 57, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings of the query terms.

59. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 58, in which the expanded query includes synonyms of the alternative encodings of the query terms.

60. (New) The computer storage medium of claim 57, in which the expanded query includes alternative language translations of the query terms.

61. (New) The computer storage medium method of claim 57, in which the expanded query includes alternative encodings and alternative language translations of the query terms.